(c) if so, the total amount involved in achieving this objective;

(d) whether in addition some 180-200 million of phones would be mobiles;

(e) whether number of internet communication is also expected to be more than triple to 18 million from 5.45 million over the same period; and

(f) the efforts being made to complete work on this project and whether Government are planning to monitor work so that the target is achieved by 2007?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir. 5,29,377 villages have been provided with VPTs as on 30-06-2005. Remaining 57,071 villages will be provided VPTs by November, 2007 with support from Universal Service Obligation (USO) Fund. This excludes villages lying in thick forest, having less than 100 population etc.

(b) The goal of providing VPTs is to provide public access to all the villages in the country by Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL). The target of 250 million lines is for individual connections from all the Telecom Operators. The VPT connections will be counted towards this target.

(c) Estimated support from USO Fund of VPTs will be around Rs. 451 crore.

(d) It is expected that of the 250 million telephone connections by the year 2007, around 180-200 millions are expected to be mobile phones.

(e) Yes, Sir. Broadband policy 2004 envisages 18 million Internet subscribers by the year 2007.

(f) The progress of installation of VPTs in 66,822 unconnected villages is being closely monitored as a component of "Bharat Nirman". The progress on targets of 250 million individual connections by the year 2007 is also being reviewed periodically.

Spectrum distribution

1133. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN:
SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the recommendations of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on spectrum distribution specially 3G; and

(b) Government's response to each of TRAI's recommendations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has issued its recommendations on issues regarding efficient utilization of spectrum, spectrum pricing and spectrum allocation procedure. TRAI has generally made following recommendations on 3G spectrum issues;

(i) 3G spectrum allocation to the existing operators should be viewed as extension of 2G spectrum allocations.

(ii) It is not desirable to allocate spectrum both in IMT-2000 2 GHz band and 1900 MHz USPCS band in a mixed manner due to non-availability of 1900 MHz USPCS band, Interference issues, spectrum reserved for micro cellular WLL systems based on TDD access techniques, etc.

(iii) IMT-2000 2 GHz band should be allocated to mobile operators for offering IMT-2000 (3G) services both in GSM and CDMA.

(iv) Each existing operator should be granted 2 x 5 MHz in IMT-2000 2 GHz band, who demands it.

(v) The allocation of IMT-2000 2 GHz spectrum as discussed above, will be subjected to rollout conditions.

(vi) In view of the possibility that initially only one or two carriers (each carrier of 2 x 5 MHz) in IMT-2000 2 GHz band are available, the allocation and pricing of spectrum has also been discussed in the recommendations.

(b) The spectrum issues are very complex, necessitating in-depth analysis. Government are examining the recommendations of the TRAI, taking into account views of all stakeholders, appropriately.

Losses suffered by postal department

1134. DR. VIJAY MALLYA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Postal Department has suffered a huge loss of Rs. 1475 crores during the year 2004-05 which is 8 per cent more than in the previous year;